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SUBJECT: USDP FEITH'S DISCUSSION WITH DCHOD BASBUG

Classified By: Ambassador Eric S. Edelman; Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) On January 31 in Ankara, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Doug Feith met with Turkish Deputy Chief of Defense General Ilker Basbug.

12. (C) The Bilateral Relationship

- Basbug described TU-US relations as "long-lasting" and "comprehensive" and added "It's not wise to tie our relationship to one problem (PKK). We can disagree in some areas."

13. (C) Regarding Iraq, Basbug said:

- Success for US and coalition is the only option.

- Basbug asked "What will be the relationship between the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) and the constitution and to what extent will provisions of TAL be retained?"

- USDP Feith noting that Iraqis will write their own constitution, said that US views are:

-- TAL is the constitution until new constitution is developed.

-- Some items from TAL will likely be reflected in new constitution

-- It is essential that principles like representative government, right to select leaders, territorial integrity and rule of law be retained.

-- US will limit its influence, as a matter of principle, because Iraq belong to the Iraqis, not to the US.

- Basbug: "We have been very much afraid of the situation in Kirkuk."

-- While statistics are fuzzy, Turks have seen reports of 120K Turkmen/Assyrians forced to leave and 300K Kurds have moved to Kirkuk.

-- Basbug sees possibility of civil unrest and fighting if a changed ethnic identity for Kirkuk is accepted. Kirkuk is the key to the region's oil.

14. (C) PKK/Kongra-Gel

- Per Basbug, US has always supported Turkey in its fight against the PKK terrorist organization.

-- Only one disagreement between US and Turkey on PKK/Kongra-Gel issue: US military action vs PKK in Iraq.

-- Basbug asked the US to show political decisiveness against the PKK/Kongra-Gel, giving example of using "just 2-3 F-16s" in attacks on PKK targets.

--- USDP Feith replied US leaders wouldn't accept such a plan and that GEN Abizaid is not in position to conduct anti-PKK operations now. The right time to address the issue remains to be seen.

15. (C) Influencing Turkish Public Opinion

- Basbug said the US's lack of action against the PKK has a "very serious negative effect on Turkish public opinion".

-- USDP Feith, thanked Basbug for his recent comments to the press and urged GOT officials to "give speeches and press statements" to counter reporting antagonistic to the US and its policies.

--- The bilateral relationship is important and needs to be supported publicly by both countries' officials.

16. (S) NATO: Afghanistan and Caveats

- USDP Feith commented on problems caused by some NATO countries limiting North Atlantic Council(NAC)-approved operations through caveats and failure to provide promised resources. Basbug said he doesn't foresee serious problems during the ISAF VII rotation, which Turkey will lead.

17. (c) DCHOD's Responses to USDP's Three Proposals

- USDP Feith explained the new initiative to develop a "Common Security Assessment (CSA)." It will be an effort by the US to engage allies and partner in thinking through security issues together with US to promote common ideas and cooperation. Basbug asked if this was a NATO responsibility. USDP Feith proposed to get started bilaterally and said it might later become work for a larger group.
- Basbug suggested the CSA could be a topic for the Joint Staff Talks in the spring or the High Level Defense Group meeting in June 2005.
- Basbug thought USDP Feith's proposal for a Colonel's exchange program is a good proposal, and TGS will consider it.
- USDP Feith suggested more cooperation with Turkey regarding the US Joint Forces Command's "lessons learned" methodology. The DCHOD was familiar with JFCOM's work and said a Turkish flag officer is leading the section in Portugal. The DCHOD said he would consider the proposal.

18. (C) PSI, F-16 Permanent Basing

- USDP Feith encouraged Turkey to play a larger role in the Proliferation Security Initiative. Basbug said Turkey supports PSI.
- Basbug seemed to understand the PSI Core Group no longer meets and accept Turkey's being a part of the Expert's group.
- In response to USDP Feith's statement that the US is not asking for permanent basing of F-16 squadrons at Incirlik, Basbug noted.
- F-16 units can deploy to Turkey and stay for six months at a time, in accordance with the US Turkish defense (DECA) agreement.
- TGS is ready to open discussion on Weapons Training Deployments at any time.

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